



Islamic Republic of Afghanistan National Environment Protection Agency

Environment and Social Impact Assessment



"Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) shall be implemented by the Government to protect the environment and community well-being in Afghanistan and thereby assist in achieving progress towards sustainable development." EIA Policy Vision of Afghanistan, Environment Law of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan (Official Gazette No. 912, dated 25 January 2007).

What is EIA?

A tool to achieve sustainable development

In 1992, a United Nations Conference on Environment and Development was held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. That conference discussed the world's environment and development concerns for the 21st century, now popularly know as Agenda 21. During that conference, the EIA process was recognized as one of the tools that will help achieve sustainable development goals. Agenda 21 encourages all countries to adopt the EIA process for proposed development activities that are likely to have significant impact on the environment.

The Islamic Republic of Afghanistan implemented an EIA process as an environmental management tool under the Environment Law of 2007, to achieve sustainable development and protect the environment. The EIA process are procedures used to evaluate the likely environmental and social impacts, both beneficial and adverse, of proposed projects, plans, policies or activities. It is designed to enhance the quality and reduce development impact of proposed projects by identifying ways of improving project selection, project siting and design, and implementation.



Why is EIA needed?

To protect the environment

Its purpose is to help ensure that environmental laws, regulations and procedures are properly implemented. The basis for undertaking an EIA process is to minimize the adverse effects linked to proposed development project. "Adverse effect" means any actual or potential effect on the environment that may in the present or in the future harm the environment or that may lead to an impairment of the ability of people and communities to provide for their health, safety, cultural and economic well-being. This definition coincides with the policy vision that seeks to place the communities' health and well being at the centre of the policy objective. This is achieved by ensuring the environment is protected from harmful activities.



Who benefits from the EIA process? Afghanistan

EIA engages many different stakeholder groups in the process of protecting the environment and ensuring sustainable development. These include:

- Regulators: who need to know the potential impacts of a proposed project, whether these impacts are acceptable or not, and how to control them
- (2) **Investors and developers:** who need to know where to site the project and how to avoid environmental problems so as to ensure a successful project
- (3) **Planners:** who needs to know the scope of impacts and how these affect other land owners and users of natural resources
- (4) **The Public:** who have the right to know about activities that may affect their surrounding community and natural environment



Why is EIA important for Afghanistan?

It promotes the sustainable use and development of natural resources

Afghanistan needs development projects. Prevailing poverty conditions, high population growth rate and haphazard development activities, combined with prolonged conflict and natural disasters such as recurring droughts, have significantly degraded natural resources. To address these problems, the EIA system can help promote the wise use of natural resources and sustain development activities over the long-term.

The objectives of Afghanistan's EIA policy are:

- > To ensure that environmental considerations are explicitly addressed and incorporated into the development decision making process;
- > To anticipate and avoid, minimize or offset the adverse significant biophysical, social and other relevant effects of development proposals;
- > To protect the productivity and capacity of natural systems and the ecological processes which maintain their functions; and
- > To promote development that is sustainable and optimizes resource use and management opportunities.



Who needs an EIA permit?

Individuals or Institutions engaged in development activities

The Environment Law of 2007 prohibits project proponents, including individuals and institutions (government, non-government, or private company), to undertake an activity or implement a project, policy or plan that is likely to have significant adverse effect on the environment without obtaining a permit from the National Environmental Protection Agency (NEPA). The subsequent EIA Regulation of 2008 defines activities or projects listed under Category 1 or Category 2 that require permits from NEPA. It is the responsibility of the project proponent to apply for an EIA permit.

Category 1

Activities likely to have significant adverse effects that are sensitive, diverse, or unprecedented, and affects an area broader than the sites or facilities subject to physical works.

Category 2

Activities with potential adverse impacts on human populations or environmentally sensitive areas that are less adverse than those in Category 1 and are site specific and in most instances irreversible.

A. Energy

- Hydroelectric power generation over 50 MW
- 2. Thermal power generation over 200 MW
- Transmission lines (11 KV and above) and grid stations
- 4. Nuclear power plants (or projects)
- 5. Petroleum refineries

B. Manufacturing and processing

- Cement plants
- 2. Chemicals projects
- 3. Fertilizer plants
- Food processing industries including sugar mills, beverages, milk and dairy products, with total cost of 75M Afs or more
- Industrial estates (including export processing zones)
- Man-made fibers and resin projects with total cost of 75M Afs or more

A. Agriculture, Livestock and Fisheries

- Poultry, livestock, stud and fish farms with total cost more than 7.5M Afs
- Projects involving repacking, formulation or warehousing of agricultural products

B. Energy

- Hydroelectric power generation less than 50 MW
- 2. Thermal power generation less than 200 MW
- 3. Transmission lines less than 11 KV, and large distribution projects
- 4. Oil and gas transmission systems
- Oil and gas extraction projects including exploration, production, gathering systems, separation and storage
- 6. Waste-to-energy generation projects

- 7. Pesticides (manufacture or formulation)
- 8. Petrochemicals complex
- Synthetic resins, plastics and manmade fibers, paper and paperboard, paper pulping, plastic products, textiles (except apparel), printing and publishing, paints and dyes, oils and fats and vegetable ghee projects, with total cost more than 75M Afs.
- 10. Tanning and leather finishing projects

C. Mining and mineral processing

- Mining and processing of coal, gold, copper, sulphur and precious stones
- Mining and processing of major non- ferrous metals, iron and steel rolling
- 3. Smelting plants with total cost of more than 40M Afs

D. Transport

- 1. Airports
- Federal or Provincial highways or major roads (except maintenance, rebuilding or reconstruction of existing roads) with total cost of more than 40M Afs. Widening of existing roads may require an EIA.
- 3. Railway works

E. Water management, dams, irrigation and flood protection

- Dams and reservoirs with storage volume of 50 million cubic meters and above or surface area of 8 square kilometers or more
- 2. Irrigation and drainage projects serving 15,000 hectares or more

F. Water supply and Treatment

Water supply schemes and treatment plants with total cost of 20M Afs or more

C. Manufacturing and processing

- Ceramics and glass units with total cost more than 40M Afs.
- Food processing industries including sugar mills, beverages, milk and dairy products, with total cost less than 75M Afs
- 3. Man- made fibers and resin projects with total cost less than 75M Afs.
- Manufacturing of apparel, including dyeing and printing, with total cost more than 25M Afs
- 5. Wood products with total cost more than 20M Afs.

D. Mining and mineral processing

- Commercial extraction of sand, gravel, limestone, clay, sulphur and other minerals not included in Schedule II with total cost less than 75M Afs.
- 2. Crushing, grinding and separation processes
- 3. Smelting plants with total cost less than 40M Afs

E. Transport

 Federal or Provincial highways and roads (except maintenance, rebuilding or reconstruction of existing metalled roads) with total cost less than 40M Afs.

F. Water management, dams, irrigation and flood protection

- Dams and reservoirs with storage volume less than 50 million cubic meters of surface area less than 8 square kilometers
- 2. Irrigation and drainage projects serving less than 15,000 hectares
- 3. Small-scale irrigation systems with total cost less than 40M Afs.

G. Waste Disposal

- Waste disposal and/or storage of hazardous or toxic wastes (including landfill sites, incineration of hospital toxic waste)
- Waste disposal facilities for domestic or industrial wastes, with annual capacity of more than 10,000 cubic meters.

H. Urban development and tourism

- Land use studies and urban plans (large cities)
- Large-scale tourism development projects with total cost 40M afs or more.

I. Environmentally Sensitive Areas

All projects situated in environmentally sensitive areas

G. Water supply and Treatment

Water supply schemes and treatment plants with total cost less than 20M Afs.

H. Waste disposal

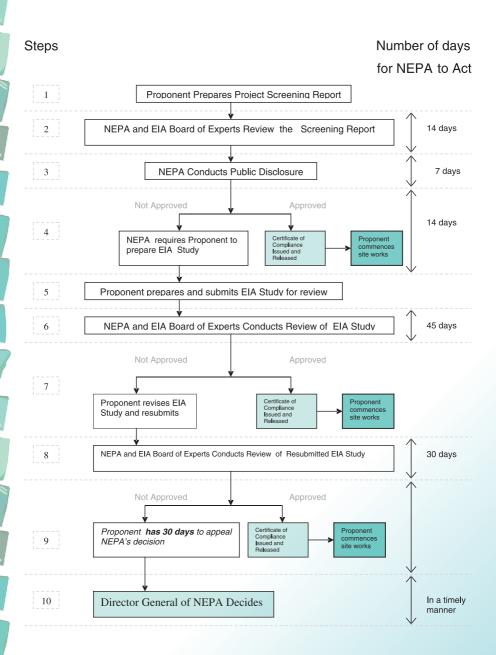
Waste disposal facility for domestic or industrial wastes, with annual capacity less than 10.000 cubic meters

I. Urban development and tourism

- 1. Housing schemes
- 2. Public facilities with significant offsite impacts (e.g. hospital wastes)
- 3. Urban development projects



What are the steps in the EIA process?



What information is required in the Screening Report?

It is the responsibility of the Project Proponent to prepare a Screening Report. The Screening Report should contain the following information:

The Proponent: Name, address, telephone, email and contact point for further queries, for the individual or organization proposing the project

The Project: Brief description of the nature and purpose of the project. Outline plans or drawings. Size of the project in terms of, for example, site area, size of structures, throughput, input and output, cost, duration. Programmed for implementation including construction, commissioning, operation, decommissioning, restoration, after-use. Scale of construction activities required.

The Location: A map and brief description of the site and its surrounding area showing physical, natural and man-made features such as topography, land cover and land use (including sensitive areas such as housing, schools, recreation areas); physical/spatial planning policies or zoning; areas or features designated for their nature conservation, landscape, historic, cultural or agricultural importance; water features including groundwater and flood protection zones; planned future developments.

Potential Sources of Impact: Completion of a Rapid Environmental Assessment should provide insight into the potential sources of impact including social impacts. Any further information which provides detail on the following factors would be useful; emissions to air, land or water or any residues that may arise from construction and operation activities and the proposed methods of discharge or disposal, any noise, vibration or heat generated from the project, hazardous or raw materials to be used or stored at the site and procedures for safe management and requirements for raw materials and energy and their likely sources.

Mitigation: Brief description of any measures the developer proposes to use to reduce, avoid or offset significant adverse effects would be useful.

Other information, which may be useful:

- identification of other permits required for the project;
- relationship of the project to other existing or planned activities;

- other activities which may be required or may occur as a consequence of the project (e.g. extraction of minerals, new water supply, generation or transmission of power, road construction, housing, economic development)
- planned future developments on or around the site;
- additional demand for services such as sewage treatment or waste collection and disposal generated by the project;
- photographs of the site and its surroundings.
- alternative sites, processes or environmental mitigation measures considered by the developer.



Where does a Proponent submit a Project Application?

Application for any proposed project should be submitted to the NEPA Provincial Office where the proposed project will be implemented. Proposed projects to be implemented in the Province and City of Kabul must be submitted to the NEPA Central Office through the Division of Environmental Management and Sustainable Development. It is preferable that the Application includes a Screening Report.

How can the public provide comments on the project?

Public participation is legally mandated in Afghanistan. During the preparation of a screening report, the Project Proponent must inform affected communities of project activities and their likely impact and solicit their views and concerns. Information on how the Project Proponent consulted the public should be part of both the Screening and EIA reports. Further, NEPA reserves the right to conduct a Public Disclosure, after receiving a project application and a screening report. This will be done by displaying public information about the proposed project, organizing public meetings with the community members likely to be affected by the proposed project, and providing copies of the screening report to interested members of the public.

When and how is an EIA Study Prepared for a project?

Following the evaluation of screening reports, the EIA Board of Experts will either recommend that NEPA issues a certificate of compliance (permit) or require the Project Proponent to prepare an EIA Study of the proposed project. For doing detailed EIA study, the Proponent and NEPA will discuss and agree on the Terms of Reference for undertaking the EIA study. It is the responsibility of the Project Proponent to prepare and submit an EIA study to NEPA for review and approval.



What document does a Proponent receive when the project is approved?

NEPA provides the Project Proponent a Certificate of Compliance when the project proposal is approved. The certificate may contain additional conditions not mentioned in the EIA report. NEPA reserves the right to monitor implementation of these conditions and compliance with best practices and standards.

References:

Environmental Impact Assessment Regulations, Official Gazette No. 939, dated 10 March 2008

Administrative Guidelines for the Preparation of Environmental Impact Assessments, Issued by the Director General in terms of Executive Order No. 1/87 dated 3 June 2008

National Environmental Impact Assessment Policy, an Integrated Approach to Environmental Impact Assessment in Afghanistan, Final November 2007

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Photos:

Karim El-Jisr:

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CRS:

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Offie Pablo:

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Abdullah Barakzai:

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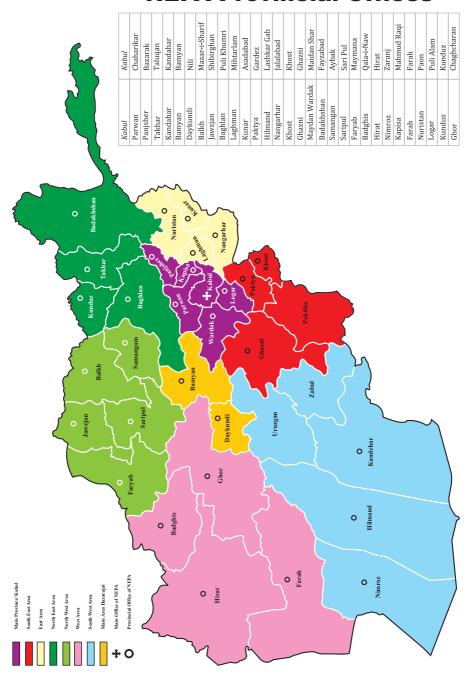
Page 11 – Waste water management from poultry processing factory, Hirat







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